

GC2Y 2000-21: Animal Ethics

A&S 243

MW 3:30 – 4:45

Dr. Mark Causey

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Office Hours: MWF 9:00-10:00 and MW 1:00-2:00, or by appointment

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"We do not regard animals as moral beings. But do you suppose the animals regard us as moral beings? --An animal which could speak said: 'Humanity is a prejudice of which we animals at least are free.'" – Friedrich Nietzsche

"The animals of the world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans any more than black people were made for white, or women created for men."—Alice Walker

Animal ethics? Do animals (other than the human ones) have *ethics*? Isn't that something distinctively human? Could our human ethical systems, just like our physical bodies, have naturally evolved from animal origins? If animals indeed do have at least the rudimentary building blocks for an ethic, what does that mean in terms of our ethical treatment of them? Do animals count morally? If so, how and to what extent? These are some of the questions we will explore together this semester. We will explore the ethical aspects of animals' interactions with each other as well as our interactions with them (we are animals too, after all). We will explore the ethical implications of some of the main ways that we humans utilize other animals: for food, clothing, entertainment, and for scientific research. Do we humans have a moral right to utilize animals in these ways? We will look for answers in some of our various philosophical and religious traditions from around the world.

Required Texts:

- *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals*, Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce (ISBN: 9780226041636)
- *Empty Cages*, Tom Regan (ISBN: 9780742549937)
- *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, & Wear Cows*, Melanie Joy (ISBN: 1573245054)
- *FAQs About the Use of Animals in Science: A Handbook for the Scientifically Perplexed*, Ray Greek and Niall Shanks (ISBN: 9780761848493)
- *Animals and World Religions*, Lisa Kemmerer (ISBN: 9780199790685)

Course Objectives:

- Students will analyze complex problems relating to various philosophical approaches to animal ethics. Topics covered will range from the use of animals for food, clothing, research, and entertainment;
- Students will critically evaluate the evolutionary bases for human ethics as revealed by recent studies in animal ethology;

- Students will critically evaluate information and successfully formulate their own positions by engaging in current debates between various animal rights, animal liberation, and animal welfare positions;
- Students will articulate their understanding of these issues as they affect human-animal relationships and why these are important;
- Students will analyze various world religious and ethical approaches to animal issues and the human-animal relationship.

How we will meet these objectives:

- Through readings, films, speakers, class activities and discussions we will explore various facets of the human-animal relationship;
- We will explore what various philosophical and religious traditions around the world have to say about animal ethics;
- We will encounter, evaluate, and debate a variety of opposing viewpoints;
- We will explore the various ways in which geographic and cultural issues impact human-animal relationships;
- Through writing assignments, class discussions, exams, and presentations the student will develop his or her ability to analyze these issues both verbally and in writing.

How we will measure the attainment of these objectives (AKA *grading*):

	Points possible:
• Reading Presentation	10
• Daily participation and journal reflections	20
• Reaction Papers (3 @10 points)	30
• Term Paper	25
• <u>Animal Ethics Symposium</u>	<u>15</u>
TOTAL	100

[90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, 0-59 = F]

- **Prior to mid-semester you will receive feedback on your academic performance in this course.**

Points will be assigned according to the following guidelines:

- ❖ **Reading Presentation:** each student will be responsible for leading off the discussion of the reading for one selected class period by presenting a short précis of the reading and *posing discussion topics/questions to the class*. The use of visual aids (e.g. Powerpoint or Prezi, handouts, marker board, etc...) to help the focus and flow of the presentation is *highly recommended*. Presentations will be graded on clarity, completeness, and comprehension.

- ❖ **Daily participation and journal reflections:** each student will keep a journal of his/her reflections on our course topics, readings, and films throughout the semester. You should write a reflection on the reading *prior to each class* (a paragraph or two) concerning what you found of particular interest, questions that arose for you, what you thought about the reading (did you agree/disagree?), or how you connected (or didn't) with the reading to be discussed that day. *Bring the journal with you to each class as I'll often ask you to share your reactions to the reading and will also ask you to reflect on any films or speakers we may have.* I will sometimes (but not always) give you class time for writing. On average, you should be writing around 2 pages a week in the journal. I will collect them 2 or 3 times during the semester so I can see how you are engaging and what you are thinking about. You should use these reflections to comment and ask questions in class.
- ❖ **Reaction Papers:** 3 short (3-5 pages, typed, double-spaced) reaction papers based on assigned prompts will be spaced throughout the semester. One of these papers will be a film analysis modeled on Plumwood's analysis of the movie "Babe." You will have some choice as to the film you analyze, but you will have to watch the film on your own (this makes up the rest of your 5th hour requirement for the course).
- ❖ **Term Paper:** the culminating project of the semester, in conjunction with the Animal Ethics Symposium, will be the completion of a well-researched and well-argued term paper (10-12 pages, typed, double-spaced, MLA format) on a topic of the student's choice in consultation with the instructor. In addition to being well-researched, the paper should also take up a *clear ethical position* in relation to its topic and *argue for that position*. The position taken is not as important as the support for the position provided. A thesis and tentative outline will be due Oct. 15. The final paper will be due on the last day of class.
- ❖ **Animal Ethics Symposium:** at the end of the semester our class will host an Animal Ethics Symposium to which we will invite other members of the campus community. The symposium will feature individual student displays (posters) of a class theme chosen and researched by the student. The presentation should be informative and visually engaging. The students will display their work and be on-hand during a class period to answer questions and engage in dialogue. Presentations will be graded on content, clarity, and creativity.

Religious Observance Policy

Students are permitted to miss class in observance of religious holidays and other activities observed by a religious group of which the student is a member without academic penalty. Exercising of one's rights under this policy is subject to the GC Honor Code. Students who miss class in observance of a religious holiday or event are required to make up the coursework missed as a result from the absence. The nature of the make-up assignments and the deadline for completion of such assignments are at the sole discretion of the instructor. Failure to follow the prescribed procedures voids all student rights under this policy.

Assistance for Student Needs Related to Disability

If you have a disability as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, you may be eligible to receive accommodations to assist in programmatic and physical accessibility. Disability Services, a unit of the GCSU Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, can assist you in formulating a reasonable accommodation plan and in providing support in developing appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to all GCSU programs and facilities. Course requirements will not be waived, but accommodations may assist you in meeting the requirements. For documentation requirements and for additional information, we recommend that you contact Disability Services located in Maxwell Student Union at 478-445-5931 or 478-445-4233.

Student Opinion Surveys statement

Given the technological sophistication of Georgia College students, the student opinion survey is being delivered through an online process. Your constructive feedback plays an indispensable role in shaping quality education at Georgia College. All responses are completely confidential and your name is not stored with your responses in any way. In addition, instructors will not see any results of the opinion survey until after final grades are submitted to the University. An invitation to complete the online opinion survey is distributed to students near the end of the semester. Your participation in this very important process is greatly appreciated.

Academic Honesty

The integrity of students and their written and oral work is a critical component of the academic process. The submission of another's work as one's own is plagiarism and will be dealt with using the procedures outlined in the GC Catalog. Remember that allowing another student to copy one's own work violates standards of academic integrity. Any quotation from or paraphrasing of another's work requires proper acknowledgment and citation. *Proven cases of plagiarism will result at the very least in an "F" for the assignment that cannot be made up. Egregious cases may result in the failure of the course and reporting to the college.* Also remember that allowing another student to copy one's own work is considered cheating. See the student Honor Code at: <http://www.gcsu.edu/studentlife/handbook/code.htm>

Fire Drills

Fire drills will be conducted annually. In the event of a fire alarm, students will exit the building in a quick and orderly manner through the nearest hallway exit. Learn the floor plan and exits of the building. Do not use elevators. If you encounter heavy smoke, crawl on the floor so as to gain fresh air. Assist disabled persons and others if possible without endangering your own life. Assemble for a head count on the front lawn of main campus or other designated assembly area.

Tentative Schedule:

AUG 18	Introduction
<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>ANIMAL ETHICS</i>
20	Bekoff & Pierce chap. 1
25	Bekoff & Pierce chap. 2
27	Bekoff & Pierce chap. 3
SEP 1	LABOR DAY
3	Bekoff & Pierce chap. 4
8	Bekoff & Pierce chap. 5
10	Bekoff & Pierce chap. 6
<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>ANIMAL RIGHTS</i>
15	Singer (online)
17	Regan chap. 3
22	Regan chap. 4
24	Engel Jr. (online)
<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>ANIMALS AS FOOD</i>
29	Joy chap. 1-2
OCT 1	Joy chap. 3
6	Joy chap. 4
8	Joy chap. 5-6
13	FALL BREAK
15	Joy chap. 7 <i>*Paper Thesis and Outline due</i>
20	Plumwood (online)
<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>ANIMALS AS CLOTHING</i>
22	Regan chap. 7
<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>ANIMALS AS PERFORMERS</i>
27	Regan chap. 8
<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>ANIMALS AS COMPETITORS</i>
29	Regan chap. 9
<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>ANIMALS IN SCIENCE</i>
NOV 3	Greek & Shanks chap. 1-2
5	Greek & Shanks chap. 3-4
10	Greek & Shanks chap. 5-6
12	Greek & Shanks chap. 7-8
17	Greek & Shanks chap. 9-10
<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>ANIMALS IN THE RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS</i>
19	Kemmerer chap. 2
24	Kemmerer chap. 3
26	THANKSGIVING
DEC 1	Kemmerer chap. 7
3	Kemmerer chap. 5 or 6
8	Symposium

FRIDAY sessions: 9/5, 9/19, 10/3, 10/17, 11/7, 11/21 will be for films and/or speakers